



CURRENT SITUATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

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The year 2016 marks the starting point to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 4, which is quality education. The targets encapsulated in SDG 4 are better known as Education Agenda 2030. The Agenda has a vision of humanity in building a sustainable and quality education to fulfill human rights, justice, and dignity based on cultural diversity, and mutual responsibility and accountability in realizing peace and sustainable development.

The target for early childhood education as mentioned in the Education Agenda 2030 is: “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.”

In the context of Indonesia, the achievement of One Village One ECE Center Program reached 72.29 percent or 58,174 villages already have at least one ECE Center. The achievement is encouraging and shows that

early childhood education has now become a society movement.

The Gross Enrollment rate (GER) for Early Childhood Education (ECE) also shows an improvement reaching 70.1 percent. Moreover, currently there are 190,225 ECE Centers which are almost entirely organized by the public¹. In line with it, the government allocates Operational Funding approximately USD 50 BOP student/year with the priority of children aged 4-6 years old. In the event of a budget surplus, District/City Government could use it for early ECE Centers or Institutions that serve learners under the age of 4 years old.

According to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 2/2016, ECE Centers or Institutions that deserve to get the allocation are those that have at least 12 students. The maximum amount of grant that an ECE Center or Institution could receive is approximately USD 2,800 per year.

The Presidential Decree Number 60/2013 on Holistic Integrative Early Childhood Development mandates the fulfillment of the essential needs of young children, namely parenting, nutrition and health care, education and child protection.

Research on the human brain also shows that the early years of life - when the human brain is being built - is a golden moment to develop children's full potentials and

¹ Center of Education and Culture Data and Statistics, 2016

sharpen academic, social and cognitive skills to succeed in schools and lives today and tomorrow.

A research by Professor James Heckman, an economist from the University of Chicago and a Nobel laureate in economics, mentioned that one US Dollar investment in quality early childhood education will earn revenue of seven US Dollar. Therefore, each Indonesian Rupiah for quality early childhood education will receive a seven-fold yield. Then, the key lies in quality of early childhood education for ALL and all for QUALITY. Policy, planning, budgeting, implementation and assessment are all directed for quality.

When quality early childhood education is available to every child, it means that we have a safe place for every child to grow and learn; a starting point they need to succeed in schools and in the workforce with high income, as well as to build a stable family in his time later.

The Ministry of Education and Culture started to realize SDG-4 target by providing early childhood education Operational Grant to 190,158 institutions, Educational Toys and Games through decentralized fund, improving the quality of teachers through a tiered training, and growing positive character since early on. An example of character building is carried out through comics and songs, fairy tales, folklore, books based on mother tongue, and teachers' guidance on the 2013 Curriculum implementation.

We also collect other success stories from the public to be uploaded to the Teachers Online Homepage that will contain tales and songs in the House Story canal.

Besides providing online platform to improve access to and quality of early childhood education, gender equality and equity needs to put in place for the sake of balance. This is due to the fact that the girls at early years also suffer from irresponsible gender classroom activities.

ECE and primary school teachers have insufficient knowledge and skills creating gender bias for girls' development. Stereotypes and sexism limit the girls' potential growth and development because internalizing negative stereotypes impacts their self-esteem and ultimately, academic performance. Long-term gender bias effects for the girls at early years become most apparent in adolescence. Thus, in order to improve access and quality for young girls, gender mainstreaming at early years is important. Therefore, since 2013, the Directorate of Early Childhood Education Development (Directorate of ECED) aim to improve quality of girls' education through access, provision of community-based ECE Centers, early-year gender mainstreaming, parenting and teacher training.

On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Culture, I want to thank all parties who have fully contributed to make all of these efforts possible.